

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04
H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01
SP-02 SS-15 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 DHA-02
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O R 111230Z JUL 77
FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2765
INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA
AMEMBASSY COLOMBO
AMEMBASSY DACCA
AMEMBASSY KABUL
AMCONSUL KARACHI
AMCONSUL LAHORE
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L ISLAMABAD 7080

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y PARAS NUMBERS (6 VICE 7)

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PK
SUBJECT: POLITICAL SITUATION IN PAKISTAN

1. THE MARTIAL LAW ADMINISTRATION ANNOUNCED ON JULY 10
THE IMPOSITION OF STRICT PUNISHMENTS FOR VARIOUS CRIMES.
THE DRACONIAN NEW MEASURES ARE BEING BILLED, AT LEAST
PARTIALLY, AS AN INTRODUCTION OF SHARIAT (ISLAMIC) LAWS IN
PAKISTAN. THE REGULATIONS PROVIDE FOR THE AMPUTATION OF A
HAND OF THOSE CONVICTED OF THEFT AND THE DEATH PENALTY FOR ANY-
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ONE WHO ATTACKS, INJURES OR RESISTS ANY MEMBER OF THE MILITARY
OR A CIVILIAN OFFICIAL. WHIPPING HAS ALSO BEEN PRESCRIBED
FOR A NUMBER OF OFFENSES INCLUDING AN INTENT TO INSULT
THE MODESTY OF A WOMAN. THE SEVERER FORMS OF PUNISHMENT
CAN ONLY BE ORDERED AFTER REVIEW BY THE CHIEF MARTIAL LAW
ADMINISTRATOR AND ALTERNATIVE PUNISHMENTS ARE LISTED FOR
EVERY CRIME.

2. GENERAL ZIA, ACCORDING TO THE CANADIAN DCM, KLD CANADIAN AMBASSADOR MACLELLAN THAT HE DOES NOT PLAN TO RELEASE THE IMPRISONED NATIONAL AWAMI PARTY (NAP) LEADERS, INCLUDING WALI KHAN, AS THEIR CASE IS BEING CONSIDERED BY THE JUDICIARY AND IT WOULD BE A MAJOR POLITICAL DECISION. ZIA ALSO REPORTEDLY SAID THAT THE REMAINING IMPRISONED LEADERS OF THE PNA AND PPP (EIGHT FROM EACH SIDE) WILL BE RELEASED AFTER AN ELECTION CODE OF ETHICS IS DRAFTED AND THEY HAVE SIGNED IT. FINALLY THE CANADIAN AMBASSADOR WAS TOLD THAT THE MILITARY IS CONSIDERING NOT ALLOWING ELECTION- EERING TO BEGIN UNTIL AFTER RAMADAN (MID-SEPTEMBER) AND THAT GENERAL ZIA WILL CONSIDER RESIGNING HIS COMMISSION AFTER THE ELECTIONS IF HE CONCLUDES THAT HIS PRESENCE WOULD BE AN EMBARRASSMENT FOR THE NEW CIVILIAN REGIME.

3. CONGEN LAHORE REPORTS THAT THE POLITICALLY VOLATILE LAHORIS, WHO AT FIRST WELCOMED THE MARTIAL LAW ADMINISTRATION, ARE NOW QUESTIONING WHETHER ELECTIONS WILL BE HELD, AS ANNOUNCED, IN OCTOBER. THEY CITE AS A POTENTIAL IMPEDIMENT TO AN ELECTION THE RELEASE OF BHUTTO ANTAGONIST HANIF RAMAY BY THE LAHORE HIGH COURT AND RAMAY'S VEHEMENT ANTI-BHUTTO STATEMENTS.

4. A BHUTTO SUPPORTER HAS FILED A CASE WITH THE LAHORE HIGH COURT CHALLENGING THE CONSTITUTIONALITY OF THE MARTIAL
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LAW. THE RAWALPINDI BAR ASSOCIATION PASSED A RESOLUTION ON JULY 10 CALLING FOR THE TRIAL OF FORMER PM BHUTTO AND HIS ASSOCIATES FOR MURDER, ILLEGAL DETENTION OF PRISONERS AND THE TRANSFER OF CAPITAL ABROAD.

THE CHALLENGE IN LAHORE AND THE BAR ASSOCIATION RESOLUTION IN RAWALPINDI REFLECTS A PENCHANT IN PAKISTANI POLITICS FOR USING LEGAL CHANNELS AS A POLITICAL TOOL TO HARASS ONE'S OPPONENTS.

5. ON THE PRESS FRONT, USIS REPORTS THAT GENERAL ZIA MAY BE CONSIDERING THE DISSOLUTION OF THE NATIONAL PRESS TRUST WHICH CONTROLS THE ENGLISH-LANGUAGE PAKISTAN TIMES, AMONG OTHERS. ACCORDING TO THE REPORT ZIA IS HAVING HIS NEW ATTORNEY-GENERAL STUDY THE LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OF SUCH A MOVE. IRONICALLY, ONE OF THE PLANKS IN THE PPP'S 1970 CAMPAIGN PLATFORM CALLED FOR DISSOLUTION OF THE PRESS TRUST. AFTER HE ASSUMED POWER, HOWEVER, BHUTTO CONCLUDED THE PRESS TRUST WAS TOO VALUABLE A HANDLE ON PUBLIC OPINION TO LOSE.

6. ONE CHANGE FROM THE BHUTTO DAYS IS THAT THE GOVERN-

MENT NO LONGER ISSUES PRESS ADVISORIES. THE NEW GOVERNMENT
APPARENTLY PREFERS TO CALL IN THE EDITORS EVERY DAY FOR
A BRIEFING. THE EVER CAUTIOUS PAKISTAN PRESS CONTINUES
TO CARRY LITTLE IN THE WAY OF POLITICAL REPORTING, HOWEVER.
MUSAWAT RENEWED ITS ANTI-AMERICAN COVERAGE ALLEGING,
IN THE JULY 11 EDITION, THAT THE US TRAINS ANTI-CASTRO
TERRORISTS WHO ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR, AMONG OTHER ACTS, THE
BOMB BLAST WHICH DESTROYED A PLANE DEPARTING CUBA.
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